



A Study Of Factors Affecting Education Of Tribal Students In Parvathipuram Manyam District

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ABSTRACT

India is a land with many cultures, faiths, food habits, traditions and rituals, way of life, united like the petals of a single flower. The national movement and the exposure to the western culture mediated by the colonial rule made Indians self-conscious of their cultural identity. Tribals in India present a significant degree of cultural and ethnic diversity. They differ in their socio-cultural levels as well as in their behaviour patterns. The Article 46 of the Indian Constitution talks about promotion of educational and economic interests of people belonging to Schedule Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs) and other weaker sections. The education of tribal children can significantly be influenced by different socio-cultural and economic factors. There is a gap between school culture and family culture of children, creating a situation of cultural mismatch, resulting into several problems that obstruct education of tribal children. The socio-economic status of tribal students has a direct bearing on their education at secondary level. The present study is an attempt to explore the socio-economic status of tribal students and its impact on their academic achievement. The study was conducted using survey method. The sample of the study consists of 600 students (300 boys and 300 girls) selected randomly from 20 Ashram schools in Parvathipuram Manyam District. The data were collected from the students using a questionnaire. The variables considered for the study include gender, parental income and location of the school. The data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The findings of the study revealed that the gender and location of the school have no influence on the perceptions of tribal students towards their socio-economic status affecting education. However, parental income has a significant positive relationship with their socio-economic status.

Key Words: Tribal students, Socio-economic status, Cultural identity, Ashram Schools

INTRODUCTION

Education of tribal children is an important task before the Government of India. The Article 46 of the Indian Constitution talks about promotion of educational and economic interests of people belonging to Schedule Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs) and other weaker sections. The article says: "The State shall promote with special care the

educational and economic interests of weaker sections of the people and in particular of SCs and STs and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitations". For several historical, economic and social reasons, the scheduled groups have remained economically backward and socially retarded even to this day. This is true with respect to their educational levels also. The biggest issue with teaching tribal children is the lack of adaptability of tribal children to non-tribal conditions. There is a gap between school culture and family culture of children, creating a situation of cultural mismatch, resulting into several problems that impede quality in the education of tribal children. Further, the economic condition of tribal people is so poor that they do not desire to forego the labour power of their children by sending them to school. The parents do not have a positive attitude towards the education of their children; rather they are interested in engaging them in some remunerative employment to support their family. In most of the tribal areas, the schools are located far away from their habitations which prevent them to have access to education. The curriculum being followed in schools does not cater to the specific needs of the tribal students. It is the responsibility of the Government and policy makers to evolve curriculum which is relevant, decentralized and flexible; and to adopt appropriate pedagogy in teaching tribal children. The curriculum should reflect on the tribal culture and take into account the local needs of the tribal students. Further, the parents should realize the need and importance of education for their children with a view to bring the tribal communities into the main stream of the society.

THE MEANING AND NATURE OF A 'TRIBE'

The term "tribe" originated around the time of the Greek city-states and the early formation of the Roman Empire. The word 'tribe' was derived from the Latin term, "tribus", which means "one third". The word originally referred to one of the three territorial groups which united to make Rome. It has since been transformed to mean "a group of persons forming a community and claiming descent from a common ancestor" (Oxford English Dictionary). Common ancestors, descent and common dialect are some of the important attributes to understand the group/community as a 'tribe'.

Tribes are people with different ways of life and society. They have their own customs, traditions, religious belief, etc. They have their own local language. According to **Majumdar, D.N. (1937)**, "a tribe is a collection of families or group families bearing a common name, members of which occupy the same territory, speaking the same language and observe certain taboos regarding marriage, profession or occupation and have developed a well-assessed system of reciprocity and mutuality of obligations".

The Imperial Gazetteer of India (1911) defines a tribe as a "collection of families bearing a common name, speaking a common dialect, occupying or professing to occupy a common territory and is not usually endogamous though originally it might have been so" **According to Vidyarthi, L.P. (1981)**, the 'tribe' is a social group with definite territory, common name, common dialect, common culture, behaviour of an endogamous

group, common taboos, existence of distinctive social and political system, full faith in leaders and self-sufficiency in their distinct economy.

Naik, T.B. (1968) proposed the following seven criteria by which a tribe can be recognized.

1. A tribe has the least functional inter-dependence within the community;
2. It is economically backward;
3. It is geographically isolated from other peoples;
4. It speaks a common dialect which may however be subject to regional variations;
5. A tribe is politically a unit under a common tribal authority;
6. A tribe's members are averse to change; and
7. A tribe has its own traditional laws which often differ from those of the majority communities.

From the study of the anthropological literature, it appears that the term, 'tribe' has been used for those groups of human beings, whose place of residence is situated in remote areas like hills, forest, sea coasts and islands; and whose style of life is quite different from the present day civilized men. Thus, a 'tribe' can be understood as a collection of indigenous people who share a common name, a common language, a shared territory and strong kinship ties. They also practice endogamy and have unique customs, rituals, and beliefs, among other things.

The 'tribes' are commonly referred to as Adivasis. In India, Adivasis are considered the poorest of the poor. Although they may have had a memorable past, their current situation is terrible. They rely on the trees for their livelihood and live in hilly and forested locations. On the one hand, they lead normal lives, but on the other, they are excluded from the mainstream of contemporary Indian progress. Tribal people's lives are dominated by complicated issues like illiteracy, land alienation, exploitation, poverty, and lack of information. They have limited access to jobs, easy finance, market technologies and information. They also have limited access to education, health and nutrition. Even though the position of Adivasis varies widely depending on their socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds, women nevertheless experience discrimination in many facets of life within this social group.

TRIBAL LITERACY IN INDIA

According to Census-2011, the number of scheduled tribes in India is 10,42,81,034. It is 8.6% of the total population of India. A total of 9,38,19,162 people belonging to scheduled tribes reside in rural areas whereas 1,04,61,872 people in urban areas. The scheduled tribes are 11.3% of the total population of rural areas and 2.8% of urban areas. There are about 550 tribes in India. The literacy scenario of the Scheduled tribes in general is below the literacy rate of the general population of the country. As per 2011 census, the literacy rate among tribal (59%) is found to be far below the overall literacy of the country (73%).

THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS OF TRIBAL STUDENTS

The Socio-economic Status of a community encompasses not only the income status of people but also their beliefs, customs and traditions which they inherit from their ancestors. Socio-cultural and Economic status can encompass attributes of quality of life as well as the opportunities and privileges afforded to people within that society. Further, the socio-cultural and economic status is consistent and reliable predictor of a vast array of outcomes across the life span, including physical and psychological health. The educational outcomes of tribal children are affected by socio-cultural and economic factors, in addition to school-related variables (**Sujatha, 2004**). Access to basic education still remains a challenge for a large segment of tribal population across the country, especially in economically or/and educationally backward areas (**NCERT, 2006**). The dropout rates for tribal children between classes I-V have been particularly high in India. Further, a number of studies have shown that tribal children have lower achievement levels as compared to non-tribal children (**Sujatha, 2004**). Socio-cultural and economic conditions occupy a prime place in the life of every individual. If we look into the socio-cultural and economic conditions of tribes, they are far below the status of other communities living in the main-stream of the society. Therefore, it is the need of the hour to improve their socio-cultural and economic status to facilitate their all round development.

FACTORS AFFECTING THE EDUCATION OF TRIBAL STUDENTS

The education of tribal children can significantly be influenced by a variety of factors including social, economic, cultural and institutional elements. The following are some of the key factors that affect their education:

1. Economic Factors

Poverty: Many tribal communities face economic hardships, which can limit to educational resources, transportation, and basic necessities.

Lack of Infrastructure: Inadequate infrastructure such as poor school buildings, lack of electricity and insufficient educational materials hampers learning of tribal students.

2. Geographical Factors

Remote Locations: Many tribal communities live in remote and inaccessible areas making it difficult for students to reach schools. This also affects the availability of qualified teachers and resources.

Natural Disasters: Areas prone to natural disasters can disrupt the regular Schooling process.

3. Cultural Factors

Language Barriers: Tribal students may speak languages or dialects different from the medium of instruction, making comprehension and communication challenging.

Cultural Disconnect: The curriculum and teaching methods may not reflect the cultural context of tribal students, leading to disengagement.

4. Social Factors

Discrimination and Prejudice: Tribal students may face discrimination or prejudice from peers, teachers and the broader community, affecting their self-esteem and participation.

Parental Education and Involvement: Limited educational background of parental parents and lack of awareness about the importance of education can affect students' educational aspirations and support at home.

5. Educational Factors

Quality of Education: The quality of teaching and learning resources in schools serving tribal areas may be lower than in urban areas.

Teacher Availability and Training: There is often a shortage of trained and motivated teachers willing to work in remote tribal areas.

6. Health and Nutrition

Health Issues: Poor health and malnutrition can affect cognitive development and school attendance.

Access to Healthcare services: Limited access to healthcare services can intensify health-related barriers to education.

7. Government Policies and Support

Policies and Schemes: Government policies, scholarships and special schemes can provide financial and academic support to tribal students. However, the effectiveness of these measures depends on proper implementation.

Legal Framework: The legal and administrative framework may not always adequately protect the educational rights of tribal students.

8. Community Attitudes and Support

Community Engagement: The level of community involvement in education can impact the effectiveness of educational initiatives. Positive community support can encourage higher enrollment and retention rates.

Addressing these factors requires a multifaceted approach, including government Intervention, community engagement and culturally sensitive educational practices.

NEED FOR THE PRESENT INVESTIGATION

Tribes are one of the diverse groups among the Indian population. They remain disadvantaged mostly as they are considered the lowest section of the Indian society since the ancient times. The tribes remain disadvantaged due to various factors like geographical and cultural isolation, lack of proper health facilities, inability to satisfy basic needs, lack of control over resources and assets, lack of education and skills, malnutrition, lack of shelter, poor access to water and sanitation, vulnerability to shocks, violence and crime, lack of access to proper infrastructure facilities and technologies and lack of political freedom and voice. All these challenges can make their living a difficult task. Education plays the most crucial role to change this situation but their poor educational achievements slow down the rate of progress of these people. The Government of India has undertaken different welfare measures during the successive planning periods and allotted funds for different developmental schemes. Though the result is not very encouraging, rather it emphasizes the need for taking this issue more sincerely and find out the right way to bring an effective change in the situation of tribal communities. Previously, several studies have been conducted on this problem but most of them are at macro level. But, the problems and priorities of tribal people vary from one area to another depending on the situation of local needs. Therefore, it is necessary to conduct a study at micro level to identify and quantify the socio-cultural and economic factors that are responsible for the backwardness in the education of tribal people. Hence, the investigator thought it relevant to conduct a micro level study on the factors affecting the education of tribal students.

This study is an attempt to have an idea of the present socio-economic status of the tribal people and its impact on the education of their children in schools. For this, the investigator selected the students studying in the Ashram schools in Parvathipuram Manyam district of Andhra Pradesh. The researcher intends to explore the perceptions of tribal students in Ashram schools towards the influence of different factors affecting their education. The present study is an attempt in this direction.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objective of the present investigation is to explore the perceptions of tribal students in Ashram schools towards the influence of socio-cultural and economic factors affecting their education.

Further, the investigation aims to study the influence of gender, parental income and location of the school on the perceptions of tribal students in Ashram Schools towards the influence of socio-cultural and economic factors affecting their education.

HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

The following hypotheses have been formulated for the present investigation:

- (i) There is no significant difference in the perceptions of tribal boys and girls towards the influence of socio-cultural and economic factors that affect their education.
- (ii) There is no significant difference in the perceptions of tribal students whose parental income is less than Rs.1 lakh and those with Rs.1 lakh and above towards the influence of socio-cultural and economic factors that affect their education.
- (iii) There is no significant difference in the perceptions of tribal students studying in rural and semi-urban schools towards the influence of socio-cultural and economic factors that affect their education.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study is limited to find out the perceptions of 4600 tribal students (300 boys and 300 girls) selected randomly from 20 Ashram schools located in Parvathipuram Manyam district of Andhra Pradesh. The study is confined to know the influence of three demographic variables, viz., Gender, parental income and location of the school on the perceptions of tribal students towards the influence of socio-cultural and economic factors that affect their education.

METHODOLOGY

(a) Sample: The sample of the study consists of 600 tribal students (300 boys and 300 girls) selected randomly from 20 Ashram schools located in Parvathipuram Manyam district of Andhra Pradesh selected by using Random Sampling technique.

(b) Research Tool: The researchers used a well prepared questionnaire consisting of 32 items as the tool of research for the present investigation. After selecting the items for the tool, the researchers verified whether the tool prepared for the present investigation is in conformity with the conditions required by a standard measuring instrument. The tool was initially administered to 60 students (30 boys and 30 girls) studying in Ashram schools under pilot study. On conducting item analysis, the discriminating power of 30 items has been found positive and that of 2 items is negative. The negative items have been removed from the pool; and the final form of questionnaire consists of 30 items which are foolproof in all respects.

(c) Administration of the Tool

The final form of the standardized questionnaire consisting of 30 items on various factors relating to the socio-cultural and economic status of tribal students influencing their education has been administered to 600 students (300 boys and 300 girls) studying in 20 Ashram schools in Parvathipuram Manyam district of Andhra Pradesh. These students are from classes 8 and 9.

STATISTICAL INTERPRETATION OF DATA

The data collected has been analyzed using different statistical techniques such as Mean score values, Standard Deviations and t-ratios; and is presented in the following table:

Table showing t-values of different variables relating to the perceptions of tribal students towards the influence of Socio-cultural and economic factors affecting their education

| S. No. | Variable | | N | Mean | S.D. | t-ratio | Result |
|--------|------------------------|---------------------|-----|--------|-------|---------|--|
| 1 | Gender | Boys | 300 | 102.17 | 28.39 | 0.51* | *Not Significant at 0.05 and 0.01 levels |
| | | Girls | 300 | 100.97 | 28.91 | | |
| 2 | Parental income | Less than Rs.1 lakh | 480 | 90.21 | 29.72 | 4.18* | *Significant at 0.05 and 0.01 levels |
| | | Rs.1 lakh & above | 120 | 102.00 | 27.10 | | |
| 3 | Location of the school | Rural | | | 27.32 | 0.38* | *Not Significant at 0.05 and 0.01 levels |
| | | Semi-urban | 430 | 101.80 | 28.07 | | |
| | | | 170 | 100.85 | | | |

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

On the basis of the analysis and interpretation of data, the researchers have arrived at the following findings and drawn the conclusions.

1. There is no significant difference in the perceptions of tribal boys and girls towards the influence of socio-cultural and economic factors that affect their education.
2. There is significant difference in the perceptions of tribal students with their parental income less than 1 lakh and those with 1 lakh and above towards the influence of socio-cultural and economic factors that affect their education

It is concluded that the tribal students whose parental income is Rs.1 lakh and above perceived higher towards the influence of socio-cultural and economic status that affect their education as compared to their counterparts whose parental income is less than Rs.1 lakh.

3. There is no significant difference in the perceptions of tribal students studying in the schools located in rural and semi-urban schools towards the influence of socio-cultural and economic factors that affect their education

4.

CONCLUSIONS

From the findings of the study, it is concluded that gender and location of the school have no influence on the perceptions of tribal students towards socio-cultural and economic factors that affect their education.

However, the parental income has a positive significant influence on the perceptions of tribal students towards socio-cultural and economic factors that affect their education.

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

The following are the educational implications of the present study.

- (i) The present study helps the students understand how socio-cultural and economic factors influence their education.
- (ii) The study helps them realize the need for education to improve their socio-cultural and economic status in the society.
- (iii) The study is an eye-opener to the policy makers to evolve policies with a view to improve the socio-cultural and economic status of tribal communities.
- (iv) The study helps to improve the working conditions in Ashram schools in order to provide quality education for tribal students.
- (v) The study helps the parents to realize the need for education of their children to improve their socio-economic status.
- (vi) The study would help to improve the enrolment of tribal students in Ashram schools.
- (vii) The study would help to reduce the drop-out rate among tribal students in Ashram schools.

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